

**SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MANAGING
WORKFLOW USING A PLURALITY OF SCRIPTS**

Invented by
Sridhar Dathathraya

Patent for System and Method for Managing Workflow Using a Plurality of Scripts

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MANAGING WORKFLOW USING A PLURALITY OF SCRIPTS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention generally relates to workflow management and, more particularly, to a system and method for managing workflow using a plurality of different scripts.

2. Description of the Related Art

Workflow is a concept that can be expressed as the automatic routing of documents to the users responsible for working on them (www.techweb.com/encyclopedia). Workflow is concerned with providing the information required to support each step of the business cycle. The documents may be physically moved over the network, or maintained in a single database with the appropriate users given access to the data at the required times. Triggers can be implemented in the system to alert managers when operations are overdue. Alternately stated, workflow is a defined series of tasks within an organization to produce a final outcome (www.webopedia.com). In general practice, workflow is a defined set of actions or procedures that occur to a document, after the document is scanned, faxed, or copied into a selected folder.

The manual flow of documents in an organization is prone to errors. Documents can get lost or be constantly shuffled to the bottom of the in basket. Automating workflow sets timers that ensure that documents move along at a prescribed pace and that the appropriate person processes them in the correct order.

Integrating workflow into existing software applications may require extensive reprogramming because, although independent workflow software can launch a whole application, a workflow system must be able to invoke individual routines within the application. As
5 a result, vendors of application software have teamed up with workflow vendors to provide the appropriate interfaces and/or they have developed their own workflow capability. Workflow standards developed by the Workflow Management Coalition (WfMC) are expected to provide interoperability between workflow software and
10 the applications as well as between different workflow systems.

Workflow software is not the same as workgroup software, otherwise known as groupware. Workflow deals with the step-by-step processes, whereas workgroup systems are concerned with information sharing and threaded discussions among users.
15 Groupware, or workgroup computing, focuses on the information being processed and enabling users to share information. Workflow, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of the process, which acts as a container for the information. Workflow combines rules, which govern the tasks performed, and coordinates the transfer of the
20 information required to support these tasks. This is "process-centered" rather than "information-centered."

Sophisticated workgroup computing applications permit a user to define different workflows for different types of jobs. For example, in a publishing setting, a document might be automatically
25 routed from writer to editor to proofreader to production. At each stage in the workflow, one individual or group is responsible for a